

Jewish soil. A Lower Paradise is also mentioned in the Talmud and Midrash, as well as in the mystical and philosophic writings of the Jews in the later Middle Ages. In fact, a passage in the *Ma'ani-al-nafs* closely resembles that of Shahrastani, to wit:

And God has bestowed upon this class of the righteous a place specified in Scripture, the *gan elohim*, i.e., the earthly paradise They will linger therein until they will brighten and become resplendent Afterwards they will ascend to the Upper Paradise to mingle therein with the angels.¹⁹

The fact that Balyaris' period of thousand years plays no part whatever in Ibn Ezra's and Maimonides' eschatology is also best accounted for by the absence of such Christian influence.

2. ARABIAN DOCTRINES OF RESURRECTION

Muslim scholastic theology, on the other hand, knows nothing of a double resurrection. In view of Sura 2:26; 22:65 and 30:39, *yuhyikum* of Sura 45:25, cannot refer to the future. Consequently, the phrase in which it occurs cannot be translated "Allah will revive you, then cause you to die, then resurrect you, etc.," but, following the unanimous opinion of commentators, must be rendered by "Allah giveth you life, afterwards causeth you to die, and hereafter will resurrect you, etc." Nevertheless, if we are to probe Maimonides' belief in *resurrectio carnis* for inconsistencies, we must necessarily extend our investigation to include the views of the Mohammedan philosophers on the subject. Maimonides' debt to them was profound, and should similar inconsistencies also crop up in their views on resurrection, our inquiry may be greatly aided by that objectivity and fullness of perspective which only comparative data can afford. However, no more than three sources can be cited to this effect, for of all *philosophical* eschatologies only those of the "Brethren of Purity," Avicenna, and Averroes have come down to us. The following quotations will summarize their ideas on the subject.

The Brethren of Purity teach:

¹⁹ *Kitab ma'ani al-nafs*, ed. by Goldziher (Berlin, 1907), pp. 60-62, Introduction, p. 67, text. See also *Tamid* 32b and 'Erubin 19a.

Know, O brother, that those who believe that man is no more than a bundle of flesh and bones, etc., animated by *accidentiae*, regard resurrection not otherwise than the restoration of the decomposed body with its effaced *accidentiae* to its former integral state, in preparation for final judgment. This sort of doctrine befits women, children and the ignorant rabble, inasmuch as it can best spur them on to good and best deter them from evil. However, those possessed of a higher intelligence believe that the body is associated with a substance that is independent of it and nobler than itself, called "soul" or "spirit." According to them, this spirit, after death, may return to the original or to a substitute body. This opinion is loftier and comes nearer to the truth, and, at the same time, serves the moral ends within its respective sphere as adequately as the first within its own. But there is also a third group whose intellectual powers rank highest. These believe that the purpose of the soul's sojourn in this world is to set itself aright, perfect its form, pass from the state of potentiality and concealment into that of manifestation and activity, broaden its outlook through contact with the sense objects and images, and acquaint itself with the natural, political and theological sciences. Enriched by these multifarious experiences, the soul will awake from its slumber and remissness and will longingly look up to the spiritual world whence it came. It will then find itself immersed in an alien material cosmos, sunk in its whirlpool of passions . . . and beset by its plight and tribulations. Yet in spite of all these hardships, it will consider its sufferings evanescent and its imprisonment in this world as of temporary duration. And whosoever casts life into such shadow and disapprobation cannot conceive resurrection otherwise than the severance of the soul from the body in order to lead an autonomous existence in its pristine abode. Indeed the prophet has said: "By his very death one achieves his resurrection."²⁰

. . . Know, O brother, that every thoughtful and provident craftsman knows that his shop is doomed to demolition, i.e., that some day the strength of his body will wane and his youth will disappear. He who has thus anticipated its destruction and accumulated resources for the fateful day will need no other "shop" to derive subsistence therefrom, but can thereafter afford to live in retirement and thrive on what he has saved.²¹

More reservedly, Avicenna asserts:

It is fitting to define at this juncture the transformed state of the human soul upon separating from the body. It is imperative that you know that the promise of resurrection is partly doctrinal in

²⁰ *Ikhwan al-ṣafa'*, Bombay ed., III, 88-90. Cf. also II, 336-42, 351-58.

²¹ *Ibid.*, III, 81-82.

nature, and, as far as this aspect of it is concerned, there is no way to ascertain it except by referring to the Koran and by implicit belief in its authority. This promise pertains to the flesh. And since the ultimate bodily rewards and punishments are well known from the ample descriptions of them in Scripture, it is not necessary to expatiate here on the subject. As for the other aspect of it, it can be rationally made out and proved, and is also attested by prophecy. It relates to the ultimate spiritual rewards and punishments. These can be intellectually gauged, in spite of the fact that at present they cannot be grasped by our imaginative faculty for reasons that I shall make clear in the sequel. The philosophers of divinity are more concerned with the spiritual than with the bodily rewards, so much so as to appear not to care for the latter, even if they were offered to them as an immediate reality.²²

One of the tasks of the science of theology is the analysis of the concept of resurrection. It proposes to expound the fact that were it to be assumed theoretically that the body would not be quickened after death, the surviving soul alone would then be subject to reward and punishment. The virtuous spirit, i.e., the tranquil soul that contemplates truth in sound judgment and performs the good deeds that are binding by Scripture and reason, would then attain a degree of happiness which is beyond all imaginable happiness, surpassing the one vouched for in Scripture. Reason, however, does not deny it that exceeding delectation may also be in store for the body. Indeed, by the words with which He inspired His apostles, God has graced His pious servants with the promise of a twofold bliss, both spiritual and material. He is mighty at any time to carry out this promise, if He only so wishes. The analysis goes on to show that reason alone is sufficient to ascertain the reality of the supreme spiritual bliss. On the other hand, the reality of the ultimate material prosperity can only be established by the authority of the Divine Law. In parallel manner, we infer that the future spiritual plight of the wicked is more intense and lasting than described in Scripture. Our analysis also endeavors to characterize those who will bear for ever those transcendent spiritual sufferings and those who will be afflicted with them for a time only. But it does not touch upon the physical sufferings to which the sinful creatures are doomed, for reason alone, without the aid of Scripture, is not sufficient to prescribe their reality. On the other hand, the reality of the mental woes can also be established by means of speculation, analogy, and logical proof. Now, the ultimate punishment of the body is attested by prophecy whose validity in turn is recognized by reason, and whose existence is cogent by proof. The prophetic pronouncements therefore com-

²² *Kitab al-najat* (Rome, 1593), p. 80; *Al-shifa'*, Teheran ed., twelfth page from end.

plement the findings of reason. In other words, in the case of phenomena regarded by reason to be only possible, but not actual or cogent, should prophecy (which, as we said before is rationally sustained), confirm specifically their existence or non-existence, its verdict must be binding upon reason. Thus what was rationally a mere possibility and no more, has now with the aid of prophecy been raised to a more positive status of knowledge.²³

Finally Averroes asserts:

Religions differ as to the posthumous condition of the blessed and wretched souls. Some do not represent in sensate terms what the virtuous soul will experience then of delight and the accursed one of sorrow, but explicitly state that conditions then will be spiritual and pleasures angelic. Others, on the other hand, have striven to depict them apperceptively, i.e., to illustrate the joy there by means of the pleasures of the flesh here, deducting of course the anguish with which they are inextricably bound in this world. In similar manner, they have described the distress there in terms of the bodily sufferings here, subtracting naturally the pleasures incidental to them in the present life. This happened either because the prophets of the latter religions by revelation learned of these conditions something which the pure abstractionalists did not learn, or else realized that sensate descriptions are best understood by the common people, and that they can best crave for them or shun them. Hence they told us that God will cause the return of the blessed soul to the body in which she will everlastingly enjoy the most sensate gratification, and that is its state in paradise; and that, on the other hand, God will restore the wretched soul to the body to suffer therein the greatest physical pain, and that is its condition in hell.

And this is the case with our religion, Islam, when describing the life beyond. We thus find in the Koran proofs comprehensible by all as to the possibility of these conditions, and this is the utmost that the mind can predicate about those matters. All these proofs either belong to the category of inferring the possibility of the existence of an object, or rather its coming into existence, from the fact of the existence of its equal, or to the category of deducing the possibility of the generation of the fewer and smaller from the fact of the existence of the many more so and greater of its kind.²⁴ Sura 36:37 ff. may serve as an example of the first proof:

²³ *Rasa'il* (Constantinople, A.H. 1298), pp. 78-79.

²⁴ I substitute here *الاكبر* for *الاكثر* and *الاكثر* for *الاكبر*. The need for these emendations is obvious. M. J. Müller's German translation (Munich, 1875) is accurate on the whole, but at times he failed to understand the text. Mohammed Jamil's English translation (Baroda, 1921) is altogether impossible.

"And he propoundeth unto Us a comparison [that we cannot resurrect the dead], and forgetteth that We have created him," etc. The proof in these verses is effected by means of the analogy drawn between the return and the first entry (of the soul into the body), these being phenomena of equal significance. Moreover, this proof, besides affirming the possibility of *resurrectio carnis*, removes by the words "He giveth you fire out of a (moist) green tree" all doubt as to the admissibility of the doctrine, even if one should regard the concepts of "entry" and "return" as not being of parallel purport. In other words, the claim of unparallelism, advanced on the ground that the "entry" was into the hot and moist and the supposed "return" will be into the dry and cold, is to be overridden by the consideration that God can evolve and create the contrary from the contrary as He can the like from the like. As for an example of the second proof, it is found in Sura 36:81 ff.: "Is not He who hath created the heaven and earth able to create [new creatures] like unto them? Yea, certainly, for He is the wise creator," etc. (To be exact), these verses contain two positive proofs of the possibility of resurrection with a refutation of a denial of it to boot. Indeed were we to exhaust all the verses in the Koran bearing on these proofs, our discussion would become unduly longdrawn, especially since they may all be classified under the (two) types of proof we have mentioned.

As we have said above, all faiths agree that the soul after death is subject to various states of happiness and misery, but they differ as to the description of these states and as to the manner of impressing the people with their existence. And it seems that such concrete presentation of them, as in our religion, makes for the greatest enlightenment of the greatest number and can best fascinate them with what there is in store for them in the hereafter. And, (mind you), it is with the multitude that all religions are primarily concerned. As for the abstract presentation, it seems that it is less likely to impress the masses with the need for contemplation on the things of the hereafter, and that they would crave and fear it less than they would the physical presentation. To resume, it appears that the concrete presentation would be more appealing to the average man than the abstract one, and that the latter would be more to the liking of the Kalamists, the controversialists among men, and these are in the minority.

And so we find the Moslems divided into three groups as to the interpretation of conditions in the life beyond. One group maintains that the pleasures and sufferings there are the very pleasures and sufferings we experience here, that is to say, they are qualitatively identical, but differ from each other only as to perpetuity and termination, i.e. the former are eternal and the latter of temporary duration. The second group believes that the existences are heterogeneous in nature, but this group is subdivided into two groups. One thinks that the yonder world, though described in

terms of concrete experience, is really a world of spirits, and that it has been described so in order to bring it down to the level of popular understanding. In support of this claim they adduce many scriptural proofs, but since these are well known, it would serve no purpose to enumerate them here. The second of these groups believes that the yonder world is an abode for bodies, but that the quality of corporeality there must be fundamentally different from that of mundane corporeality, if only for the fact that the former is everlasting and the latter doomed to disintegration. These too ground their contention on many Scriptural proofs. It seems that Ibn 'Abbas shared this opinion, for there is a saying attributed to him "There is naught in this world of the hereafter except names." It further seems that this opinion is better suited for the enlightened minority, for its possibility rests upon propositions recognized by all (learned), first that the soul is immortal, and second that its return to a new body does not strike us as unthinkable as its return to the old one, for the substance of the bodies here passes through reproduction and otherwise from one body into another, i.e., the substance that once constituted part of a single body may be found at different times in different persons. To be sure, all these bodies could not exist *in actu*, for they have the selfsame substance in common. To offer an example: a man dies, and his body is transformed into dust, and the dust into a plant. Then another man eats that plant. This changes in his system into semen, and from it a new individual is born. However, the difficulty is obviated, if we assume the generation of a new body at resurrection. Indeed the truth about the doctrines is that one may adequately perform his religious duty of professing it no matter how he chooses to construe it, provided his speculation does not lead him to deny posthumous existence altogether. Such an opinion must needs stamp one who espouses it as an unbeliever, for we derive our knowledge of the future state from both religion and reason, on the basis that the soul is immortal.²⁵

The text of the Brethren of Purity leaves no doubt as to the author's stand on *resurrectio carnis*. It is clear that he roundly denies it. This is part of the Ismailian teachings evolved by 'Abdallah ibn Maymun al-Qaddah (ninth century). The Ismailian missionary, or *da'i*, after exacting the oath of allegiance from the neophyte, would gradually introduce him to the further degrees of initiation, nine all told. In the eighth degree, the proselyte was taught among other things to understand allegorically the

²⁵ M. J. Müller, *Philosophie und Theologie von Averroes* (Arabic text, Munich, 1859), pp. 120-23.

resurrection and future reward and punishment.²⁶ But the sect, for obvious reasons, had to be very deft and cautious in insinuating its doctrines; hence we find the following statement in the same *Risala*:

Know, O brother, that the resurrection of the bodies from the obliterating graves and their quickening from the dust will take place when these souls and spirits that were temporarily attached to them in the former existence will have returned unto them. And these corpses will become sensate and reinvigorated, and will live and move after having lain inert. They will then be gathered, brought to account and recompensed, for recompense is the purpose of resurrection. And know, O brother, that the reëntry of the blessed soul into the perishing body might spell death for her in the sense that she reverts to ignorance and to being steeped in the benighted flesh . . . on the other hand, the resurrection of the soul and the quickening of the spirit means the awakening from the sleep of remissness and the arousal from the slumber of ignorance . . . and the return to her world of spirits.²⁷

This passage, contradictory in itself as well as to that previously quoted, may have thoroughly perplexed the unwary reader, but this is exactly the state of mind into which the writer schemed to steer him. By bewildering him, he avoided the appearance of a downright skeptic, and, at the same time, succeeded in planting in his mind the first seeds of philosophic doubt. Moreover, his innocently conceived paradox that the soul reverts to ignorance as it enriches itself with this world's physiological and intellectual experiences must have made confusion worse confounded. Perhaps even the seasoned Kalamists might thus have come to wonder if any of his inconsistencies should be readily condemned as deliberate. But, be that as it may, orthodox perspicacity has penetrated the enigmatic veneer and rightly denounced the tenets as un-Muslim.

As for Avicenna, discreet as he too had to be with regard to the doctrine, he could no longer follow the antiquated tactics of the Brethren of Purity. By his time, only through subtleties of a higher order could one hope to shield himself effectively from accusations of unbelief. Thoughts abruptly suppressed and contradictory theories left in mid air would now be indicative of naught else than insidiousness. Hence Avicenna had to tax his

²⁶ Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, I, 407, 415.

²⁷ *Ikhwan al-ṣafa'*, III, 86.